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2d Nicaragua rebel unit may be getting CIA aid

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SAN JOSE, Costa Rica - A spokesman for Eden Pastora, the Nicaraguan revolutionary who once fought to bring the leftist Sandinistas to power but now fights against them, has hinted that his organization has begun to receive support from the CIA.

"As long as there are no conditions attached, we will accept help from any source, including the government of the United States," said Alfonso Robelo, an exiled Nicaraguan businessman who heads the political wing of Pastora's guerrilla group, ARDE, the Democratic Revolutionary Alliance. (ARDE means "burn" in Spanish.)

He added, "I believe the CIA is part of the US government, isn't it?"

"Four or five times" this year, Robelo said, ARDE has received "unusual donations" from anonymous donors who agreed to meet outside Costa Rica - he mentioned Panama - to give arms or money to ARDE. Such donations were also made "on the high seas," he said. "We don't know who it's from and we don't ask," he said. "But we have our big suspicions."

Up to now, he said, the "unusual contributions" have amounted to "hundreds" of US, Belgian and Soviet semiautomatic rifles, and money running into "high five figures."

Pastora, known as Commander Zero, is an impulsive, independent-minded socialist who, like the nine commandantes in control in Nicaragua, calls himself a Sandinista. But Pastora opposes Cuban and Soviet influence in the regime. Until recently, he swore his movement would not be tainted by any CIA support.

Asked if he has had direct talks with the CIA, Robelo said, "I have talked to countless officials in Washington, in the Congress, the State Department, the Pentagon. It seems impossible that at least one wasn't from the CIA."

Robelo said some of the arms ARDE has received "could be" weapons captured from the Palestine Liberation Organization in Beirut and channeled through Israel.

In late July, the House voted to stop covert US aid to Nicaraguan contras. The bill, however, is not likely to prosper in the Senate.

The change in ARDE policy comes after a severe financial crisis in mid-June when, Robelo says, the group was down to its last \$3000. Pastora came to Costa Rica from his base camps in the jungles of southern Nicaragua to declare he would give up the battle if he didn't get more backing.

Pastora in the past had shunned the CIA to separate himself from other Nicaraguan "contras," or counterrevolutionaries, fighting in northern Nicaragua.

Grouped in the Nicaraguan Democratic Force, or FDN, they have received at least \$38 million in covert support from the CIA since November 1981. So far, Pastora has rejected any alliance with the FDN because it includes former officers of the national guard of the late ruler, Gen. Anastasio Somoza Debayle.

Reagan Administration officials have quietly pressed Pastora's ARDE, with its political base in Costa Rica, to join forces with the FDN, based in Honduras, so the contras could squeeze the Sandinista regime from both south and north.

But the contras, a grab-bag of anti-communist exiles ranging from very conservative, separatist Miskito Indians to leftist revolutionary idealists, remain plagued with political differences.

In Honduras, rightist FDN sources say an alliance with Pastora's ARDE will be announced in September. But political advisers to Pastora say that alliance would only split up Commander Zero's forces, creating more divisions than before.

A group of exiles from Costa Rica friendly to Pastora, led by a former Nicaraguan ambassador to Washington, Arturo Cruz, recently proposed to talk formally in Managua with Sandinista leaders to negotiate a role for themselves in elections scheduled for 1985.

Two weeks ago an FDN leader in Honduras, Indalecio Rodriguez, described that proposal as "a waste of time."

"It's too late," said Rodriguez. "Why didn't Cruz show some courage when he was still in the government?"

Last week the Sandinista regime rejected Cruz' proposals.

Meanwhile, a group of 3000 Creoles from Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast have declared they will break with Pastora to move north and join forces with the contras in Honduras.

In the ethnic mosaic of the Atlantic Coast, the Creoles are a mixture of Miskito Indians, the majority of the population there, and descendants of the Spanish conquerors.

Most of the Creole refugees, now camped at Puerto Limon, on the eastern coast of Costa Rica, left Nicaragua since February, 1983.

"Pastora said he is still a Sandinista. That is what our people are completely running from," said Creole leader Archibald Wilson. "The people say, if he is a Sandinista, why is he fighting Sandinistas? It makes a lot of confusion."

"I'm waiting to walk my people to Honduras to continue the fight against the communists," Wilson said.

Wilson said he has 300 armed men who fought with Pastora, but now want to fight with the contras in the north.